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SIN OF SLAVERY.

A Discourse,

FIRST PREACHED IN THE N. S. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
ROCKFORD, ILL., JULY 15TH, 1860,

BY ITS PASTOR,

LYMAN H. JOHNSON.

ALSO

AT THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SOUTHAMPTON, AND AT THE
THIRD CONG. CHURCH, CHICKOPEE, MASS.

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PREFACE.

I have in my possession requests from members of each of three congregations to which the following discourse was successively delivered, in compliance with which I furnish it for publication. As there were material variations on each delivery, which are included in its present form, I will relieve my friends of any responsibility for statements they did not hear, leaving the whole responsibility for the sentiments I offer, with the word of God, whence they are carefully drawn.

L. H. JOHNSON.

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SIN OF SLAVERY.

IN the subject I have selected for the present discourse, there may be an expectation on the part of those who heard its announcement, that I have special reference to the political parties in their pending struggle.

I desire to say, therefore, that I projected my present sermon, and many annual sermons like it, before any of the existing political parties was conceived of; and that the whole substance of it was projected and preached more than fourteen centuries before the discovery of America by Columbus; indeed it was comprehended in that remote purpose of salvation projected before the foundation of the world, and is a subject, moreover, which will be urged upon your attention with terrible emphasis at that Great Day, after all political parties of earth have crumbled with its fleeting dust!

I stated among the first words I was permitted to utter in this place, that I was not a Reformer, Moralist, Temperance man, Anti-Slavery man, Abolitionist, Republican, or Democrat; despising all these shallow and perishable characters, I glory alone in the name of Christian, or disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ; this includes all that is good in every other character both for time and eternity.

Never could I think of degrading the Pulpit to a tool of political aspirants, or party strife; if, however, the subject I present has a party bearing, I am not responsible for that. On the other hand I would assert the liberty and supremacy of the Pulpit as the commissioned agent of Almighty God, which is responsible alone to him.

More profane and presumptuous would it be to prescribe for the Pulpit in its utterances of God's law the limits of any human prejudice, or party feeling, *than with our puny arm attempt to curb and guide his fierce tornadoes, OR TO CHAIN THE FLYING THUNDERBOLTS OF HIS WRATH !*

I feel under no obligations to offer an apology for presenting the subject I have chosen, in this place, because it is in the highest Bible sense the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and a doctrinal discourse that I preach.

I would say, however, that I aim to raise a popular subject from its mere secular interest in the public mind, to its legitimate place in the Gospel ; and I present it here not from any regard I feel for the temporal welfare of the oppressed, or of the nation, though this has an important influence on my mind ; (I should not bring this subject into the Pulpit if I had no higher reason than the liberty of the oppressed, or the earthly happiness of mankind,) but I introduce the subject of Slavery here, because it involves the Law of God which it is my business to preach, and because the honor of Christ, in the advancement of His Kingdom and the salvation of souls, requires it of His ministering servants.

I shall take two texts for this discourse, the first of which is Deut. xxiii. 15th and 16th verses : "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best : thou shalt not oppress him."

The second text is Matt. xxii. 37th to 39th : "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The law of moral obligation admits of no change, but must necessarily be the same in all ages of the world, and all conditions of man.

The moral state of our race, however, is subject to great change ; and God, for the sake of his purposes of mercy, accommodating his dealings to the necessities of human ignorance and perverseness, gave us first, what is called the old dis-

pensation, the institutions of Moses ; and then, after the lapse of ages, as the world was prepared for it, a more complete revelation of the law in Christ.

Whatever is sinful under the new dispensation was certainly sinful under the old ; but it was impossible, without a miraculous interposition, to bring man in one day from the darkness and ruin of the fall, to the light and purity of Christ's millennial reign ; and rather than abandon our race to utter and deserved destruction, God in mercy adapted his methods to our condition, adjusted his requirements to human ignorance and selfishness, so as in the best manner possible to bring man under his law, and prepare him for the full light and liberty of Christ.

We are told that those times of ignorance God winked at ; our Saviour says for their hardness of heart he allowed them to put away their wives ; and so polygamy and other iniquities were suffered without that visitation of rebuke and judgment they would have received, had God no designs of mercy toward our race.

And there are those professedly of the Christian Church that would take advantage of God's patience and forbearance toward those ancient sinners, to excuse the grossest acts of wickedness in this age of Gospel light.

We have proof, however, that Slavery was not among the sins permitted even in those times of ignorance : but admitting that it was, I remark what every candid judgment must approve, that we are to gather God's will and law for our guidance not from the defects of his ancient children, nor from what in his forbearance he permitted them in their ignorance and hardness of heart, nor from his special and temporary commands, as those requiring the destruction of the idolatrous heathen ; but only from those precepts which express and accord with the great law of love to God and man which the Scriptures teach, and which is essentially of perpetual obligation.

Take, for example, the command to punish an idolatrous city, Deut. xiii. 15th : "Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly," &c. Do we understand this command to be obligatory on us ? Certainly not. No man does. But why not ? It is a plain command.

It is manifestly not obligatory on us, because not in accord-

ance with that treatment of our fellow-men required of us in the Decalogue and the law of love which the Scriptures uniformly teach ; it must have been, therefore, special and temporary in its nature.

*Again, Leviticus xxv. 44th : " Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids shall be of the heathen that are round about you, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids * * * * they shall be your bondmen forever, but over your brethren, the Children of Israel, ye shall not rule with rigor."

Here then, the heathen which in other places are commanded to be cut off with the sword, are to be made their bondservants instead of their brethren, the Israelites. Now I ask if this command to buy of the heathen, permitting some degree of rigor not to be used toward Israelites, applies to us any more than the command to kill the heathen idolaters ? Can we be justified from these words in enslaving men, any more than from the command to kill the Canaanites, we can be justified now in slaughtering the heathen nations ?

Most certainly not. No honest reader can for a moment suppose but these are special commands relating solely to Israel at that time ; and right then only because for wise and special purposes God so commanded, being contrary to that treatment of men laid down in his revealed law.

I will here introduce our first text, found in Deut., where the law is repeated in its most important provisions : " Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best : thou shalt not oppress him."

I ask, applying the same test to this command, if it is temporary like the previous ? Is it contrary to the law of Love embodied in the commandments to thus treat a fugitive, and allow him liberty, refusing to restore him to his oppressor ? Most certainly not ; this is manifestly included in the law, which requires us to do good to others, to succor the oppressed, and to remember those in bonds as bound with them.

This last command cannot be limited, therefore, like the previous, but must be permanent and universal as any in the Decalogue.

It commends itself to the conscience, and cannot be disregarded without conscious guilt, except by the most hardened and perverse. Nor is there anything in the circumstances of its announcement to affect in any manner its plain signification.

I pause a moment here in passing, to ask, therefore, what must have been servitude under the laws of Moses? Since fugitives from service were protected against rendition to their masters, what kind of slavery must it have been? Since the servant, when he found the burden too great, had liberty to run away, and protect himself by law against being returned, what more Slavery was there in his condition than in that of our own free servants at the North, whom our laws would compel to return to those legally claiming their service? But we don't, by any means, call our servants slaves. Besides, there are other provisions of the Mosaic law which, together with this, utterly preclude the idea of Slavery in our sense of the term.

The institution of the Jubilee of Universal Emancipation was manifestly designed to prevent this system of servitude from growing up into what we call Slavery. Universal Emancipation every fifty years, would of itself prevent the possibility of chattel Slavery. Lev. xxv. 10: "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto the inhabitants thereof," &c.

In this connection also consider the fact that there was no law permitting the sale, nor any case recorded of the sale of servants by the Israelites as of their cattle and sheep, and we must see that their servants were guarded against any degradation to mere merchandise. And again, whereas in all cases God commanded to restore lost property to its owner, as in Deut. xxii. 1st: "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox, or his sheep go astray and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again to thy brother. In like manner shalt thou do with his raiment, and with all lost things of thy brother's," &c., how can we understand the prohibition of our text that the runaway servant should not be restored, otherwise than that their servants were not to be made chattels or property, like heir goods and herds?

Such was the law against oppression in those times of ignorance at which God winked, when He permitted much that He

now strictly forbids, and for which he calls on men everywhere to repent.

If *then* the requirement of our first text was enforced, what must be God's requirement *now* in behalf of the oppressed in *these ages of Gospel light*?

We have it in the law of Christ: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," or as elsewhere stated, "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you."

This is not a mere passive Thou shalt not deliver up the slave to his master, but in addition to this requires such active effort in his behalf as you would have put forth in behalf of yourself, or your brethren and children if they were in the same state. To show its full force I would say, what no one can honestly doubt, that you are required by this law to treat the oppressed precisely as you would treat those of your own family, or circle of friends if they were in the same condition of bondage. Imagine then the state of the free and enslaved reversed, and it is your own family and friends scattered here and there under a system of Slavery. Yea, more than this, you are to treat the slave just as you would treat the Lord Jesus Christ if he were in that slave's place; for he says: "*Because ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me.*" This is the law and the Gospel from the lips of Jesus himself.

Having from God's word briefly announced the law as the foundation of my discourse, I shall proceed in this discussion to consider :

First. The question WHAT IS SLAVERY, OR WHAT CONSTITUTES IT SIN?

Secondly. THE SIN OF AFRICAN SLAVERY.

Thirdly. OUR RELATIONS AND DUTIES UNDER THE GOSPEL.

First, then, WHAT IS SLAVERY?

Here has been endless confusion in men's minds. When they wish to evade the true question at issue, they so use the term as to make it mean nothing to the purpose.

Any degree of servitude may be called Slavery. Webster says it may be voluntary, or involuntary.

In our state of society I may say with truth that in very many

cases man is the slave of woman ; and also the poor are the slaves of the rich ; and with yet more truth men are often the slaves of their own passions and appetites.

But, in the ordinary sense, I have known many instances of what might be called Slavery here in the Free States. There are many who apparently have as complete control of their servants as if the law had reduced them to chattels.

Servants, by poverty, and perhaps other circumstances, made to feel their dependence, will sometimes bear the most cruel treatment from their employers before they will run away from them. I have in my mind two different cases with which I was familiar, both in the Free States. A wealthy and influential man, of a tyrannical and avaricious disposition, had a servant in his employ for a number of years, on whom he had no more mercy than he had upon his domestic beasts. This servant had a lingering disease, induced I have no doubt by his hard usage, and when he should have been upon his bed under a physician's care, he was driven with blows and all manner of abuse to his accustomed toil until he was relieved by death.

Another was that of a female servant, employed by a brute of a man, who compelled her to an amount of toil which excited the sympathy and indignation of the neighbors, who interfered in her behalf. These are solitary instances among multitudes that doubtless occur in the Free States. There are dependents in very many households that would suffer almost anything before they would leave the only homes that they know of on earth. And there are hard-hearted men and women enough to take advantage of this fact to oppress such domestics. These, according to the loose usage of the term, may be called slaves. In the same sense, and no other, can the ancient Patriarchal and Hebrew servitude be called slavery, whose domestics were no more chattels than these.

All cases of oppression and injustice toward our household dependents are manifest violations of the Second Commandment.

But I use the term Slavery now in a more restricted sense. I apply the term only to that which is illustrated by American and ancient Roman slavery.

I trust that it will not be difficult to distinguish between

those cases of oppression to which I have referred as existing in the Free States, and occurring in spite of the laws and of public sentiment, and the reduction of men to the condition and liabilities of chattels by the force of the laws, and with the consent of the public.

In our Free States, every adult not voluntarily engaged is free by law to leave his employer ; can, by the aid of public sympathy, as well as by law, obtain a degree of justice for ill-treatment ; can own himself, collect his wages, possess his property, his wife and children, and can live in the undisturbed enjoyment of his right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—so far as it is possible for civil law to secure these rights.

I will therefore define freedom to be *the security by civil power of all those rights guaranteed by the law of God.*

And Slavery is THE ROBBING OF A MAN BY CIVIL POWER OF ALL THOSE RIGHTS GUARANTEED BY THE LAW OF GOD.

However kindly treated the slave may be by his master, it affects nothing but to aggravate, if possible, the outrage perpetrated on him in thus robbing him of his rights.

If, my hearer, in a bargain I should defraud you of your money, you would justly esteem it a violation of your right to property, because a violation of God's law which secures it to you ; and however kind I might be in my treatment of you in other respects, it would not affect my guilt and condemnation before God and man. If I should pilfer your goods, however friendly or generous toward you I might be in other respects, I would, nevertheless, be a thief, violating the Eighth Commandment, and therefore your right to property which that law secures ; I would deserve the prison, and the reprobation of all men.

If, for the sake of your money, I should take your life, however considerate I might be in my method of doing it—however gentle in my treatment of you, or faithful in my efforts to cause you as little pain as possible in the killing, it would be murder nevertheless, a violation of the Sixth Command, and therefore of your right to your life, which ought to fix on me the stigma and penalty of the highest crime. But if, by making you a chattel, I strip you of all your rights, leaving only your life

(which is intolerable without these rights), however indulgent I may be in my treatment of you as my property, I have, nevertheless, reached the *summit* and the "*sum of all villanies*," which is Slavery—the literal violation of the Eighth and Tenth Commandments, and, in spirit and effect, the breaking and trampling of the whole law in the dust. If the law, in its second table, is the exact measure and guarantee of men's rights, then slavery must embrace all the sin that any treatment of our fellow-men can constitute, for it strips them of all their rights; and as the treatment of God embraces that of our fellows, Slavery is, strictly and truly, the violation of the whole law.

The point, however, as to where the sin lies may, perhaps, be dwelt upon yet farther with advantage to those dull of comprehension.

Visit the most tolerable and decent of slave plantations. Behold the comfort with which they are provided by a kind master! the lazy content, or cheerful industry, which appears among the slaves! We discover no difference between their condition and that of the free laborers of our own harvest fields and public works. If any difference, it is rather in favor of the well-fed and clothed slaves of considerate masters. Looking at these outward appearances, men ask, Where's the sin? Sin! Do men know the condition in which they are held by law? Let me read the law: "Slaves shall be deemed sold, taken, reputed, and adjudged in law to be chattels, personal, in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever." This is the law of South Carolina, and is substantially the same wherever Slavery exists.

Judge Stroud says in his "Sketch," page 24: "It is plain that the dominion of the master is as unlimited as that which is tolerated by the laws of any civilized country in relation to brute animals." Again, page 22, 23: "The cardinal principle of slavery, that the slave is not ranked among sentient beings, but among things as an article of property—a chattel personal—obtains as undoubted law in all these, the Slave-holding States."

You all know this to be true; and looking at the well-fed and clothed slaves, do you ask, *Where is the sin?* Up here, in a fine locality, you have a beautiful country-residence, a farm

and farm-house, which you suppose to be your own by legal as well as moral title, the fruit of years' weary toil. In your advanced age, you are exceedingly dependent upon its possession for your comfort and well-being. But in my grasping avarice, by some unjust method, I have secured a legal title to it myself.

Where is the sin? I only have a piece of paper declaring a legal relation to your place! It is only a legal relation that I have secured to your property! *Do you call this sin? or "sin per se?"* The slaveholder sustains a legal relation not to a man's property merely, but also to himself, and all that is dear to him. *Where is the sin?* Is it no sin to rob a man by law of his property, his time, his wife, children, his body, liberty, character, soul and life, so far as one man can rob another?

Those slaves you see are not men, but things. They have no rights which we "are bound to respect," says Judge Taney; and their master, though kind he be, holds by purchase or inheritance the legal deeds and titles of this high handed robbery. Well fed and clothed, *indeed!* so are the neat cattle that are fatted for the butcher's stall. So the cannibal would love to see his victims sleek and well fed to whet his appetite for their flesh.

It matters not whether slaves are well fed, or starved and whipped to death; since their rights are gone, there is no possibility of any further outrage. You can't wrong a man who has no rights. You may *starve him, whip him, shoot him, kill him*, and it *will not wrong him*, IF HE HAS NO RIGHTS. It is a flat contradiction in terms, a bald absurdity to talk about justice toward those that have no rights, or say that it is injustice to whip, or kill a slave. The sin of slavery therefore *cannot lie in the treatment of a slave* after he becomes such, *but alone in his being held as a slave*. It lies in the denial of his rights, after which we may do anything to him we please.

The accidental kindness of a master to his slave therefore is altogether gratuitous. There can be no justice under a slave system requiring it of him. There are certain laws indeed in some of the slave states designed to protect the slave, as we have against cruelty to animals, but not because they have any right to such protection under a slave system any more than a horse has a right, but because our instincts revolt against any unnecessary cruelty, and because it is not for our interest to

injure our property. Nevertheless, with us men often kill and torture their animals. And when necessary for food, or for market, or other convenience or advantage, we believe it to be right to kill our domestic beasts, for they are but *chattels* and *things* designed for our use. Slaves being chattels the same must be true of them. Nay their chance is less. Outraged in the denial of their rights, where can justice limit their master in their treatment?

After having robbed them of their rights, where can the law stop the master and say, "this treatment is unjust" with any authority or hold upon his conscience? *No where!* The law making men chattels has at once swept from them every possible protection of justice, and they may in sheer sport be cut up piecemeal, or burned at the stake, and it cannot be treated as a crime or immorality.

I do indeed regard any ill-treatment the slave receives as unjust, but only because I regard the legal relation of slaveholder as unjust; if, however, *it is right to sustain the legal relation*, then *there is no treatment* under that relation that we can *consistently or justly condemn*. It is in the *LEGAL RELATION therefore that the sin of Slavery lies*.

Besides the sinfulness of the relation of itself considered, when a man is outraged by thus being made a chattel, knowing as I do the grasping avarice, lust and passion of depraved humanity, I shrink with horror from his fate. If he, or especially she, if a woman, through life, by the rare fortune of tolerable masters, escapes touching the bottom of the lowest hell on earth, it is only by the wonderful providence of God. I would not trust myself with the ownership of a man or woman. I know too well my own selfishness, lust, and passion to tempt these with such unlawful power. The letting down of my conscience in the legal relation would open all the floodgates of iniquity in my heart. I would sooner die than be the slave of a Paul; nor would I trust a daughter of mine to be the slave of the most perfect man on earth, without a legal marriage. It may be that there are many slaveholders who do not practice the iniquities which are the legitimate fruit of their legal relation. It is not however because these iniquities are not naturally included in their relation. From my own personal observation and acquaintance where slavery exists, I am prepared to say that my

worst suspicions of human nature are far more than realized if possible, in all the slave regions.

I do not design however to speak here of those horrible exhibitions with which you are familiar of slave markets, slave hunting, universal prostitution, violence and outrage, which prevail wherever Slavery exists, and which are the stamp of God's curse upon the unholy relation of master and slave.

I am sometimes asked is the slaveholder necessarily culpable for his relation? Who is, if he is not? Here is a stupendous wrong and fearful curse, which imply personal and individual guilt, for there is no guilt that is not individual and personal; no curse that does not contemplate a transgressor. Who then is guilty if not the man who sustains the legal relation of slaveholder. There are others guilty, doubtless, of apologizing for his sins, and of aiding and abetting in its practice. But who is guilty of Slavery if not the one who, by law, robs another of his rights? Again I am asked if there may not be Christians among slaveholders. I cannot say but there may be. I have seen some whom I hoped were Christians. I should hesitate long before affirming that a polygamist could not be a Christian. I know not men's hearts. Why not a cannibal also? Who would say that there could be no circumstances in which a Christian might be a man eater as well as a man stealer? These two last crimes may appear more physically gross and palpable than slaveholding; but physical grossness does not constitute sin. Sin is the transgression of God's law; and slaveholding is, if anything, the most flagrant violation of the law in these three cases. I have no choice however between the three for Christian character, except that the Polygamist has the advantage if we may so call it, of David and Solomon for examples, whereas the slaveholder has no godly example in the Bible, but on the contrary the most terrific denunciations of God's wrath and judgment; as in these words and pages, more which I might repeat: "Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong, that useth his neighbor's service without wages and giveth him not for his work." "Therefore thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbor. Behold I proclaim a liberty for you saith the Lord to the sword, to the pestilence, to the famine, and I will make you to be re-

moved into all the kingdoms of the earth." To conclude this part of my subject I remark, therefore, that the Sin of Slavery consists in sustaining the legal relation of owner of human chattels. The guilt of a man in this, as also in killing, stealing, adultery, perjury, or any other sin, is to be determined from the circumstances in which the act or relation is sustained. If I have bought slaves to liberate them, or if it is not in my power to emancipate them, at any sacrifice, then no guilt can be incurred ; but in all cases where the relation is voluntarily sustained, the slaveholder cannot be treated otherwise than as a criminal.

All Churches that fellowship him, indorse Slavery and destroy their own character. There can be no half-way ground between sanctioning Slavery as a virtue, and rejecting the one guilty of the legal relation from the Church. And it were infinitely better to reject a thousand innocent men from the church, than to compromise and destroy its character by seeming to indorse this monstrous iniquity. We should indeed treat the slaveholder with all the tenderness and mercy that the gospel requires us to treat any other criminal. Criminal, I say, for though he claims the protection of the laws of the land in the possession of his property, nevertheless as those laws conflict directly with the law of God, we cannot regard or recognize them without provoking his wrath, nor treat the slaveholder otherwise than as if he was a culprit by civil law ; for God's law is that by which we are bound above all others. Acts v. 29.

I will consider in the next place the SIN OF AFRICAN SLAVERY.

Having shown the sin of slavery, it only remains to be shown that the Africans are human, and under God's law to prove the sin of African slavery. I will throw the burden of proof upon my opponents. As the mulattos and quadroons are beginning to preponderate at the South, I demand information as to the precise point in the mixed race where the human with its subjection to the divine law ceases, and the irresponsible animal begins? But the very thought is revolting! No honest man doubts but they are human, and equal if not superior in the most essential respects to the Chinese, Esquimaux, and other portions of the human race ; or most certainly that they are equally the subjects of God's law. Even those who are ready to say that they are not human, are always ready to judge them by the

law, and to accuse them of crime and moral wrong, thus proving their own insincerity, while by practically acknowledging them the subjects of moral law they virtually concede their humanity.

All who are the subjects of God's moral law, so that they can be condemned by it, or charged with crime on its transgression, *must be human*, and *have all the rights which that law guarantees* to any man. This is enough upon this subject. But I will remark next, that I do admit the intellectual inferiority of the African race, as also of all the other races, to that race to which we belong. Africans have not the Anglo-Saxon energy nor enterprise, and they are comparatively incapable of defending their rights, hence afford peculiar temptations to a slaveholder's cupidity and lust for power. And upon this fact I shall base my *PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT against African Slavery*.

The bondservants which Israel were permitted to make of the heathen, were not blacks and inferiors, but their equals in military and social capacity, and strength. The slaves of the Greeks and Romans were chiefly those they had taken in war, their equals in every respect, except perhaps a knowledge of the arts. There is something comparatively noble about such slavery as this. There was not only a sort of necessity for reducing their prisoners to slavery to avoid killing them outright for their own protection, but there was, so to speak, a majesty and glory in a train of slaves composed of conquered princes and warriors which exalted the Roman arms, and military strength. And as it is nobler to subdue and chain the formidable and the mighty, than the weak and inoffensive; so Roman slavery, notwithstanding all its barbarity, had the worldly virtue, and glory, at least, of enchaining the conquered warriors of their brave and valient foes. But it is reserved for Christian America, in this 19th century of the Christian era, to enslave the feeble, unoffending race of negroes, and then to crown this act of infamy, justify it on the *ground of their weakness and inferiority!*

Not long since a gospel minister in a prominent place, and for the honor of the church I will not say where, said in substance that it would be the grossest outrage and crime to enslave men of intellectual and social position like ourselves, but because of the "*African's inferiority it is not sin to enslave him!*"

Oh, to say nothing of the guilt before God of such an assumption, with what surprise and contempt would the noble old slaveholders of Pagan Rome look down upon the man who could use such language in this Christian age. No such barbarous plea for slavery ever disgraced Imperial Rome! They enslaved their equals, the *nobles of a brave barbarian foe*, while Americans stoop to enslave the *poor defenceless, helpless race of blacks*, and urge as the *excuse for this crime their* WEAKNESS AND INFERIORITY! I offer no excuse for Roman slavery. It was inhuman and revolting in the extreme. What then shall we say of American Slavery, compared to which the Roman iniquity was a virtue? But I call your attention to the gospel and the law of Christ on this subject. Does Christ thus trample on the poor, and court the favor of the rich, noble, learned and great?

Rather the reverse of this; if there is any one thing which distinguishes the virtues of Christianity from heathenism it is this: *that it succors the poor, the needy, and the weak*. To the poor the Gospel is preached, and we are commanded to "defend the poor and the fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and the needy," not to the *noble*, and the *strong*; there is not a command in all the Bible to protect or succor the *rich, noble, or mighty*, for they can take care of themselves. But "deliver the poor and needy, and rid them out of the hand of the wicked." "Open thy mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed for destruction." These are the words of God.

When our Saviour was in the synagogue on a certain occasion, the Book of the Prophet Esaias was handed Him, and after reading a passage, He closed the Book and said: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." This was that Scripture: "He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, the recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised." And it is the glory of the Gospel that the attention it pays to men is in proportion to their weakness and their need. This is the law of Christianity, the reverse of that which governs the selfish and heathen world. The inferiority of the negro race is the chief argument which Christ employs against their oppression and enslavement, "Because ye did it not unto the *least* of

these, (not unto the *greatest*) unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me."

Christ takes the place of the weakest, most ignorant and unfortunate of our race, and in oppressing such as these more than any other we are guilty of wronging Christ. The lower down in humanity we go, either in our acts of charity or injustice, the nearer we come to Christ, and the more sensibly we affect his heart with joy or with grief. The humblest of our race is purchased by his blood. Even the salvation of the poor black man was the occasion of the dying struggles of the Son of God, and he is as "tender to him as the apple of his eye."

"It were better for that man who offends one of *these little ones* that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

Beware how you treat a man because he is poor, or ignorant, or black, or deformed, or filthy; for it is Christ that you thus treat, and not merely the man.

I notice yet further respecting the negro race, it is said to have been *cursed in the person of Ham*. But it was *Canaan* that was cursed, instead of *Ham*, and the descendants of Canaan inhabited Asia instead of Africa.

If, however, there was a curse of bondage pronounced against the Africans, it must be proved that we are authorized to execute that curse, any more than we are to execute the sentence of death which God has pronounced on all mankind. The last of the frivolous and monstrous reasons for African Slavery I shall notice is, *What shall we do with them if they are set free?* DO WITH THEM! What has the pirate *to do with the booty he has plundered?* What has a man to do with that which God *commands him to let alone?*

What does God require the criminal to do but to make reparation, and to the extent of his power, first and above all things else, restore those rights on which he has trampled? Will a man have the amazing effrontery and impiety to ask what shall we do with the slave when God commands us to set him free? Go, thou BRAZEN-FACED HYPOCRITE, and read the words of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and there learn if you have eyes to see, or ears to hear, what it requires you to do with the poor, and the weak, and the helpless, when they fall into your hands!

I shall conclude my discourse with the third division of my subject, OUR DUTIES AND RELATIONS UNDER THE GOSPEL.

There are many who say, "Yes, *indeed*, Slavery is a great evil," but what have we at the North to do with it?

What have *we* to do with it? What have *we* to do with the character of our nation? What have *we* to do with the welfare of our fellow men? What have *we* to do with the conversion of the world to God? What have *we* to do with the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? Let the Saviour answer: "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the *Gospel*"—(what is the Gospel?) "TO EVERY CREATURE."

Beginning at home the Christian is to seek the extension of God's Kingdom and righteousness in all the earth. I will offer, in words from heathen lips, a reason why we have something to do with Slavery.

At a mission in Syria some of the converts, learning that Slavery was practised in this country, (being informed by the Catholic Priests) came to our Missionary to ascertain the facts, and on being made acquainted therewith, notwithstanding the assurance the Missionary gave them that we had a free North, with surprise and indignation they replied: "Then let those of the North go home," (from this field) "and convert those of the South, before they come to preach to the Arabs: Even the Turks never did such things as these." Thereupon they left the Mission Chapel in disgust. I would add the mournful fact, that the enemies of our Church there are using this knowledge of our national sin with fatal effect against the work of Missions.

I would by no means comply with the counsel of the Syrian convert to relinquish our efforts in the foreign field; but I argue from this the necessity and importance of doing more toward the promotion of Christianity at home by the removal of that national curse which must ever palsy the right arm of our Missionary strength, and destroy our moral and Christian influence both at home and abroad.

I would advise, what the Syrians sagely advise, that we send Missionaries to the South and convert them; Missionaries of Jesus Christ to preach the everlasting Gospel to the perishing heathen of the South. They have not yet had the Gospel at the South, except in comparatively few instances, in most of

which it has been silenced, or driven out by mob violence. That Gospel which among slaveholders ignores Slavery, is a bastard, and cannot be the legitimate offspring of Christ. It may be the means by the overruling hand of God of salvation to many souls. I think there are no intelligent persons but will admit that the Roman Catholic Church, as corrupt as it is supposed to be, may be the means under God of the salvation of some sinners, and so may the Church South that ignores Slavery. This, however, is nothing to the credit of a corrupt Christianity, but alone to the glory of God's overruling grace. I believe, however, that a Gospel South that fails to reprove the sin of Slavery is much worse for the South, than the Catholic religion can ever be for the North. Because while it in appearance most truly embodies the Gospel of Christ, it denies him by sanctioning sin, and thus deceives and destroys a great multitude of souls.

This ought to be distinctly understood that it is *impossible to preach Christ without coming in conflict with all the sins and errors of those to whom the Gospel is preached*; and that if in any instance whatever Gospel preaching fails to conflict with a single sin, it demonstrates conclusively that it is spurious and not of Christ. It is not necessary to battle the sins of the heathen world, nor is it worth the while to attack sin anywhere except in connection with the Gospel of Christ, and on Bible grounds; but unless all who receive the Gospel are made to understand that it requires the putting away of all iniquity it will do them no good, but only prove a curse. *Righteousness* is the invariable test of genuineness in a religious faith: I say, therefore, send a pure Gospel to the South. Where are the Pauls that are ready to go, and for Christ's sake "five times receive forty stripes save one, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned," that the South may be converted to God? If it is impossible to send such a Gospel South on account of persecution, then don't send any; but with firm united purpose let Christians stand upon the truth, and declare it to the world *that there is no other Gospel than that which reproves sin and saves the sinner*. If we cannot seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness there because of persecution, then after faithful effort *let the South be abandoned*. Our skirts will be cleared, and God will speedily finish the work in judgment.

But I have no fear as to the failure of such Missionary efforts at the South. I tell you why I have no fear : because GOD IS OUR STRENGTH, *and the cause is HIS OWN*. And I know that there is no other Missionary field on the globe to which Christ more loudly calls with Macedonian cry than the Slave States.

If *Missionaries*, (not Abolitionists or mere Reformers, which are worse than nothing,) if *whole-souled Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ*, with the burden of souls at heart, with prayer, and weeping, regardless of personal safety, should throw themselves on the hearts and consciences of the South, with a whole, un mutilated Gospel, God would make it a resurrection power to wake the whole South from the grave of social corruption and spiritual death.

Martyrdom, if it were God's will, in such a cause, and in such an age as this, would eclipse in glory that of any preceding age. My great remedy for Slavery then is, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, applied in love, and in that faithfulness which love would dictate.

But this work, my hearers, must begin in the hearts of the Church North before its missions can be of any avail at the South. Our character at *home* must illustrate such a Gospel by the firmness and plainness of all our utterances on moral questions. Indeed, if the Church North had been sound in the Gospel on the Slavery question, there would be no need of sending Missionaries South ; for Slavery could not exist. But now the equivocal and time-serving course of the Church North on that subject has well nigh destroyed our influence over the Southern conscience, and confirmed the oppressor in his course of crime.

So long as from shameful want of faith in God, His people crouch and tremble at the feet of the wrong doer, fearing to rebuke his sin, they can have no influence for his conversion, nor for gaining the respect or confidence of man or God. I charge the existence of Slavery not only, but American infidelity in all its hideous forms, to this *SIN of God's people* in attempting to ignore, apologize for, and especially to defend from the Bible this monstrous iniquity.

Those who have excused Slavery by arguments from God's word, have done more to destroy faith in that word among men,

than the whole school of infidel teachers have ever done ; and the only way now to overthrow infidelity is by clearing the Bible of these false glosses, so that its law of righteousness shall appear, which no conscience can resist, and no infidelity gainsay.

Suppose the Apostles had taken the course of certain modern Christians, and managed thus to escape "five times forty stripes save one," and being stoned, imprisoned, mobbed, and murdered as they were ! They could easily have saved themselves all this suffering, by a little policy, such as is commended by portions of the modern Church ; by yielding and compromising a little here, and a little there, so as not to come so exactly in conflict with men's sinful hearts, and thus stir up their opposition. The discouragement which the Apostles had to encounter was far greater than anything with which we have to contend. How *impolitic, inexpedient* and *rash*, therefore, was their course in the judgment of a modern type of Christianity ! When the world's conversion was at stake, and they, but a handful, which to human appearance could be crushed in a moment by the enraged rulers and populace, why did they not so preach Christ as to escape conflict with the sins of men, so as to preserve peace and quiet, and thus preserve the feeble Church until it could quietly gain a foothold, and make itself more secure ? Why did they not so compromise matters as to escape those sanguinary persecutions which baptized the Church with the blood of 3,000,000 martyrs the first three centuries ? Why ? Because it would have been more fatal to yield one iota to sin, than to provoke the world's rage ; and because they had faith in God, and feared not but if they were faithful, he would give them the victory. There is, indeed, policy to be used by God's people ; there are many things which we ought not to do because inexpedient under the circumstances, though ordinarily right. It is not best at all times to do things that are right, of themselves considered, and we must be "wise as serpents," as well as "harmless as doves ;" but the most *impolitic, inexpedient, and fatal* of all things is for the Church to *pass over in silence* a SINGLE SIN for the sake of peace, or union, or success, or any other reason. Paul became all things to all men that he might save some, but he would sooner suffer death or see the world fly to fragments, than yield a hair's breadth to that *sin*

which made the Cross an offense to the unrenowned. The world must be convinced of *sin*, of *righteousness*, and of a *judgment to come*, or else it could not be converted to God. And whether to a wicked governor, or a Godless rabble, he everywhere boldly proclaimed God's law against idolatry, intemperance, and other sins which attracted his notice until men trembled, and cried out with alarm; or with rage led him forth to be stoned. Thus through their consciences he sought to reach their hearts, and multitudes were brought to Christ.

If he had denounced no other sin but that of idolatry, it would have been a sufficient example to teach the necessity of reproofing sin of any kind in order to the salvation of men. Because he happened to be silent respecting the sin of the cruel gladiatorial exhibitions, by no means implies any toleration of such horrible barbarities, nor does his silence upon Sabbath breaking imply a fear or unwillingness to rebuke that sin. The fact that he boldly reproofed one cherished form of wickedness, and made it a ground of exclusion from Church fellowship would be abundantly sufficient authority for denouncing and excluding all iniquity, and for believing that the gospel requires it in order to its success in saving men. Though men repent of all else and yet cherish one sin of which they will not repent, that they be not self-deceived, they need the presentation of that sin to prove to them their enmity and insubmission to God. And whenever I think there is a point upon which a man is sensitive, a sin which he rolls as a sweet morsel under his tongue, I am convinced that that is the very sin of which he needs to be reproofed; upon which is pivoted his rebellion, or submission, his life or death; and to save his soul he must be brought to the test of that particular sin. So it is with all men, nations, and ages of the world. Sometimes it is one point, sometimes another; and every man has had some point or form of sin upon which his will has hung in its opposition to God, and unless he is broken upon this point, as the rock of offense, it will in the end "grind him to powder." It is those *particular sins* upon which men hang their wills in resisting the divine will, that seal the damnation of their souls.

God sees that in this greedy, grasping, money-bought nation, *Slavery* is a good test of our Christianity. So he has brought Slavery upon us to try us, to prove us, to sift us, as citizens, as

Christians, as a Church, as a nation ; and as I see men shrinking, and cringing, maddened and morbidly sensitive, I am led all the more to CRY OUT *upon this particular sin*, and to assure you that there is *danger*, not from *pressing* this sin, but from *not heeding* it as the test of your submission to Christ ; of which if you fail as individuals, as a Church, as a nation, you will be *destroyed forever from the presence of God*. In respect to the law of God in all its bearings there can be but one safe course, and that is *instant and entire submission* whatever may be the temporal consequences.

All peace which we procure as individuals, as a church, or as a nation at the expense of righteousness is false and deceitful. It is the thin incrustation over the fiery volcanic elements of God's wrath ! Whatever may be the immediate temporal peril to us, or to the world, it is always safest to obey God, and seek first his kingdom and righteousness.

We are not to be governed by a view of the temporal consequences of an action but this alone, *whether it is the will of God and will glorify him !* He will take care of the results. *We are to COUNT THE COST BEFORE WE BECOME the followers of Christ !*

Unbelief trembles for consequences ; but faith that works by love, resting in God's word of righteousness and truth, fears no evil ; knowing that all things work together for good, to them that love God. So in church and in state, our only hope is to stand unyielding as adamant for the right against the wrong, while by the firm and consistent use of all the civil power Providence has placed in our hands, we seek the protection of the weak against the strong, with its sanctified sword executing summary vengeance on all evil doers and slaveholders ; at the same time by prayer, and faith in God, together with the bold declaration of his whole counsel, whether men will hear or forbear, we persuade them by both the terrors of the Lord, and the dying love of the Cross to repent of their sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls.